Special Edition

# THE KWAJALEIN HOURGLASS

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# Victory in the Marshalls paved the way to Tokyo

By Jane Toma

There were many bombs dropped during World War II. But few were as devastating to the Japanese as the one Adm. Chester Nimitz dropped on Dec. 6, 1943, when he proposed a radical revision of Operation Flintlock — the invasion of the Marshalls.

Nimitz's Central Pacific commanders recoiled in shock. Nimitz proposed to abandon their plans to take Maloelap and Wotje. Instead, he wanted to concentrate the forces for a strike at the heart of the Marshalls, Kwajalein Atoll.

Most of the Pacific commanders opposed the bold new plan. They feared it was too risky to strike deep inside the perimeter of the Marshalls with several powerful bases and hundreds of airplanes within striking range.

Press Prepares Japan For Bad
Honolulu Star-Bulletin
MARSHALLS INVADED
U.S. Forces Land On Kwajalein Atoll
U.S. Battles To Victory On Kwajalein
Biggest Naval Force In History Strikes
These Men Are Leading U.S. Attacking Forces
Christian R. Holmes Dies In New York
Honolulu Star-Bulletin
KWAJALEIN FALLS TO U.S.
19 Islets In Atoll In American Hands

Headlines back home bring good news after Tarawa.

***Nimitz overrules others***

But Nimitz felt that carrier forces and land-based fighters and bombers from the Gilberts could eliminate Japanese air power. Kwajalein would be easier to take. And, with the world's largest lagoon, would make a better staging base for future operations.

Nimitz's will prevailed, and 50 years ago, with the most powerful invasion force ever assembled to that time, American forces seized Kwajalein Atoll. Considered by military historians as the most successful amphibious operation, the invasion of the Marshall Islands, code named *Operation Flintlock*, served as the model for future operations in the Pacific and paved the road to Tokyo.

The Japanese expected to be attacked in the Marshalls, but not at Kwajalein, which was not as heavily defended as bases at Wotje, Maloelap, Mili, and Jaluit — a big payoff for striking at the center instead of the perimeter.

***Significant operation***

*Operation Flintlock* was one of the most significant operations in the Pacific Campaign. The seizure of the Kwajalein Atoll was the first capture of Japanese pre-war territory. It pierced the Japanese defense perimeter. It took strategic control of the Marshalls away from the Japanese. It severed Japanese lines of communication. It shortened the Pacific campaign. Loss of American life was less than one percent.

Masterful planning, naval and air superiority, and heavy preliminary bombing characterized the operation.

American forces assaulted Majuro, which was undefended, on Jan. 30, 1944, one day prior to the invasion. Two weeks after the seizure of Kwajalein Atoll, American forces captured Eniwetok.

***Left to wither***

Waiting for reinforcements that never came and continuously harassed by air raids, the remaining garrisons in the Marshalls were bypassed and left isolated, powerless, and doomed to "wither on the vine."

With their eastern flank penetrated, the Japanese could not hold the Bismarks, Solomons, or New Guinea.

***Ahead of schedule***

Land-based air raids and reconnaissance flights enabled the neutralization and bypassing of Truk and allowed American forces to seize the Marianas and Philippines well ahead of schedule.

The war was shortened and many American lives were saved. Many Japanese garrisons slated for invasion were effectively neutralized and bypassed. The drive through the Pacific was accelerated, and the seizure of the Marianas was advanced six to 12 months. The Marianas brought Japan within range of America's big B29s and the final blows to end the war.

### The road to the Marshalls began early

# A history of the strategy leading up to the invasion of the Marshalls

By Jane Toma

Strategic planning in the Pacific started at the turn of the 20th century with the American acquisition of distant possessions in the Pacific. In 1904, following Japan's attack on Russia, Lt. Gen. Adna R. Chaffee, Army Chief of Staff, proposed that the recently formed Joint Board (of the Army and Navy) provide war plans involving cooperation between the Navy and the Army in the event of war. That request gave rise to the color plans — a series of war plans designated as a specific color corresponding to a specific nation. The Orange plans, contingency plans for war with Japan, were reviewed and revised up through the '20s and '30s. They called for an assault through the Central Pacific. Military planners studied the Orange plans and applied them to their strategy in the Central Pacific campaign.

***More than one color***

The advent of the Axis coalition gave rise to another series of war plans, based on multiple nations — the Rainbow plans. Rainbow 5 called for alliance with Britain and outlined the American/British objectives at the outbreak of the war. It called for the Central Pacific offense to take a back seat to the war with Germany. The campaigns in the Pacific would be primarily defensive, with limited offenses until Germany was defeated. The defense of Australia and New Zealand was vital.

Military officials view an aerial view of Kwajalein.

Japan's early success in the war invalidated the Rainbow 5 plan's fundamental strategy and postponed the offensive provisions in the Pacific. Japan had weakened the U.S. Pacific Fleet, snatched the Philippines, Wake, Guam, the Gilberts, Malaya, Burma, and the Netherlands Indies, and advanced into New Guinea and the Solomons close to Australia.

***Two great commands***

On March 30, 1942, the Joint Chiefs organized the Pacific theater into two commands — the Southwest Pacific under Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Australia and the Pacific Ocean Area under Nimitz in Hawaii. The primary mission of the two commands was to defend communication lines between the U.S. and Australia, contain the Japanese, and prepare for amphibious offensives. In early 1942 the U.S. sent a substantial number of forces to Australia.

***Time to strike***

By the middle of 1942, Japan had overextended herself and was defeated at Midway and in the Coral Sea. Crippled by the loss of four aircraft carriers and hundreds of planes, the Japanese fleet no longer advanced. The time was ripe for the Allies to take the offensive.

Pacific forces began their advance through the Solomons and New Guinea and halted Japan's southward expansion.

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Adm. Ernest King and Gen. George Marshall persuaded the British to keep offensive pressure on the Japanese in the Central Pacific by utilizing resources already available in the Pacific and not hurting the primary offensive in Europe. Offensive pressure in the south would also help keep Australia and New Zealand secure.

***Trident Conference***

On May 11, 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff met at the Trident Conference to re-examine the Pacific Strategy. They proposed a Central Pacific offense, which included the Marshalls. The Central Pacific offensive, as opposed to the southern route leading to the Philippines preferred by MacArthur, was shorter and more direct. It did not require as many troops and supplies, utilized the U.S. Fleet to its best advantage, and would isolate Japan from her overseas empire.

***Battle-tested troops***

By the end of May 1943, American war planners had proposed the invasion of the Marshalls for October. However, the assault required two divisions of "battle-tested shock troops with amphibious training," since it would be the first U.S. assault against a fortified atoll. The only qualified troops available were the 1st Marine Division in the Southwest Pacific, under MacArthur, and 2nd Marine Division in the South Pacific. Transferring those troops would deprive those regions of their only amphibious divisions with combat experience and presented several political and military risks.

The Joint Planners and JCS agreed that MacArthur's campaign should not be interrupted, but concluded that the Central Pacific drive could be launched anyway. The Joint War Plans Committee was ordered to prepare a plan to assault the Marshalls for November or December.

***Not an easy task***

The committee had to produce a plan that would not interrupt MacArthur's operation. Yet they required his troops for an invasion of the Marshalls. Unable to solve the problem, they presented a new plan that called for seizure of the Gilberts as an alternate course of action.

The Joint Chiefs agreed to assault the Gilberts in November 1943, as a prelude to a drive in the Marshalls. Seizure of the Gilberts would require fewer troops and would provide air bases to be used in strikes against the Marshalls and Carolines.

***Lessons learned***

The seizure of Tarawa validated American amphibious doctrine. But casualties were high. American plan-

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# Operation Flintlock -- Southern Kwajalein Atoll

By Pat Cataldo

*Fifty years ago, U.S. forces undertook one of the most complicated campaigns in military history — the assault and capture of major Japanese naval and air bases in the Marshall Islands.*

*Out of the battles, which involved landings on 30 islands, arose a new and highly successful mode of amphibious warfare that sped the end of World War II.*

*What follows are a series of stories of the invasion of southern Kwajalein Atoll, written as battlefront communiques.*

**Jan. 30, 1944** — Kwajalein Island lies battered and burning tonight after two days of pulverizing naval bombardment and intensive bombing and strafing by land- and carrier-based planes.

The fires of destruction on Japan's principal naval base in the Marshalls are visible to men of the 7th Infantry Division (the "Hourglass Division"), veteran troops who wait for D-Day aboard vessels of the Southern Attack Force.

Roi and Namur islands, center of Japan's air power in the Marshalls, are under attack from planes and ships of the Northern Attack Force, while men of the 4th Marine Division, not yet tried in battle, also wait for D-Day.

This afternoon, the battleships *Massachusetts*, *Indiana*, and *Washington* pounded Kwajalein with 1,000 rounds of 16-inch ammunition — an average of one 250-pound shell every 15 seconds of the four-hour bombardment.

The attacks on Kwajalein, Roi, and Namur began early yesterday. Though weather was squally and skies were overcast, planes from the carriers *Cowpens*, *Monterey*, and *Bunker Hill*, positioned southwest of Kwajalein, took off an hour before sunrise for the first bombing run on Kwajalein's airfield and nearby buildings.

Despite intense and accurate antiaircraft fire, the bombing and strafing continued over the entire island throughout the day.

At Roi and Namur, planes from the carriers *Essex*, *Intrepid*, and *Cabot* began their assault at dawn, dropping 2,000-pound bombs on runways and scoring numerous hits on hangars, fuel dumps, and gun positions. Ninety-two Japanese aircraft were based on Roi, but U.S. planes at once gained command of the air, and after 0800, no Japanese planes were seen airborne.

B-25s, flying from bases in the Gilbert Islands, joined in the attack to drop 23 tons of bombs on Kwajalein and 15 tons on Roi.

More than 400 sorties were flown over Kwajalein, Roi, and Namur by carrier-based planes. U.S. losses totaled four Hellcats and a torpedo-bomber over Kwajalein. No U.S. ship was attacked by enemy aircraft.

In related actions of the past two days, the airstrip at Majuro has been completely neutralized by air attack, and Japanese installations on Wotje, Maloelap, Jaluit, and Mili have been severely damaged by bombing and strafing runs.

## 7th Infantry troops ashore near strongholds

**Jan. 31, 1944** — After a series of highly successful amphibious landings, American troops are ashore tonight on four small islands near Kwajalein and on five islets flanking Roi and Namur. They are tightening the noose on these two major Japanese strongholds in the Marshalls. Every objective was gained, with U.S. casualties classified as very light.

In actions today around Kwajalein Island (code name, Porcelain), U.S. troops captured Enubuj (Carlson), Ennylabegan (Carlos), Gea (Carter), and Ninni (Cecil) islands, and brought Gea Pass under U.S. control. American casualties were one dead, two wounded.

Forty-eight 105mm howitzers have been set up on Enubuj and are harrassing Kwajalein, as heavier 155mm guns are rapidly being landed. The naval bombardment of Kwajalein's defenses continues, and destroyer *Wall* is delivering harrassing fire on Ebeye (Burton), Japan's chief seaplane base in the Marshalls. It is known to harbor several hundred Japanese troops.

At the northern end of the atoll, the 25th Regimental Combat Team

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**Japanese communications center on Enubuj (Carlson) Island was taken at noon Jan. 31, with 20 prisoners. Fuel dump is in foreground, with communications facility in background.**

When Carlson was secure, 7th Infantry troops brought 105mm and 155mm howitzers ashore, registered on Kwajalein Island (visible in background), and began delivering pre-invasion fire.

*(From page 3.)*

of the 4th Marine Division has secured five islets near Roi and Namur at a cost of 18 American dead, eight missing, and 40 wounded. Artillery has been established ashore, and North Pass is safe for the passage of ships.

As night falls, fresh landing troops are poised for tomorrow's strikes against Kwajalein, Roi, and Namur, the main objectives of this invasion.

The action today began at dawn, when battleships *Pennsylvania* and *Mississippi* began firing on the western end of Kwajalein Island. By 0830, Enubuj, Ennylabegan, Kwajalein, Ebeye, and South Gugeegue (Beverly) were being systematically raked by the fire of four battleships, three cruisers, and four destroyers.

In preparation for landings by the 17th Regimental Combat Team on Enubuj and Ennylabegan, more than 2,000 rounds of 5-inch shells were poured on the two islands. Twenty-one tons of bombs and 50,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition were expended by 51 escort carrier planes in bombing and strafing runs.

U.S. troops captured Enubuj at noon, taking 20 prisoners after very light resistance. Within an hour, divisional artillery began coming ashore, and by 1800 the howitzers were registered on Kwajalein.

Opposed only by a few Japanese firing light rifles and automatic weapons, the 17th RCT captured Ennylabegan by 1300 without a single American casualty. Organization began immediately to set up supply dumps and repair stations.

The landing on Gea was made shortly after dawn by B Troop, a provisional unit made up of men of the 7th Calvary Reconnaissance Troop and Co. B, 111th Infantry. After a short fight, the island was secured at 0930. Twenty-two Japanese were killed and one taken prisoner; American losses were one killed and one wounded.

Ninni, which, with Gea, guards an important entrance to the lagoon, was captured by A Troop at 1230 hours. The men first mistakenly landed on Gehh, next island northwest of Ninni, after fighting strong currents and off-shore winds in their rubber landing craft. The error was discovered after a brief reconnaissance, during which four Japanese were killed and two taken prisoner. When troops proceeded to Ninni, they found it unoccupied and took possession at once.

A unique part of today's operation was the use, for the first time in the Pacific, of an underwater demolition team. At 1000 hours and again at 1600, this team worked its way to within 300 yards of the beach at the western end of Kwajalein Island, where U. S. forces will land tomorrow. They were searching for underwater obstacles and anti-boat mines.

As light faded this evening, troops of the 32nd and 184th RCTs of the 7th Infantry moved from transports to LVTs. They are scheduled to make the initial landings on Kwajalein Island in the morning.

## D-Day on Kwajalein

**Feb. 1, 1944** — After a near-perfect amphibious assault this morning on beaches at the west end of Kwajalein Island, troops of the 32nd and 184th Regimental Combat Teams and the 767th Tank Battalion have advanced approximately one-third the length of the island against stiffening Japanese resistance.

The most devastating naval, artillery, and air bombardment yet seen in the Pacific began at dawn and continued until H-Hour. At one time, two shells per second were hitting specific targets and areas ahead of the assault troops.

Altogether, nearly 7,000 14-inch, 8-inch, and 5-inch shells hit Kwajalein today from supporting naval vessels alone. Most of them landed on the main beaches before the assault.

Field artillery on Enubuj (Carlson) expended 29,000 rounds of 105mm and 155mm ammunition. Heavy bombers flew from Tarawa to drop 15 1,000- and 2,000-pound bombs on the landing area. Carrier-based dive and torpedo bombers and fighters flew a total of 96 supporting sorties.

As the landing craft started for shore, Navy aircraft made a last strafing run. Artillery shells from Enubuj were still hitting the beach when the LVTs were within 35 yards.

The first wave of troops landed exactly on schedule at 0930 at Red Beach 1 (in the vicinity of the invasion beach marker). One minute later, troops went ashore at Red Beach 2 (near USAKA Photo Lab.).

Within 12 minutes, 1,200 men and their equipment had landed without a single casualty, and amphibious tanks had advanced 100 yards

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Men of the 7th Infantry in LVTs head for Kwajalein. Landing on Red Beach 1 was at 0930 and on Red Beach 2 at 0931.

Artillery shells from Carlson were still hitting the beach when the LVTs were 35 yards from shore.

Twelve hundred men were landed without a single casualty.

*(From page 4.)*

to support the troops as they organized.

So effective was the pre-landing bombardment that Japanese resistance was at first largely confined to sporadic small arms fire as the 32nd RCT advanced along the ocean side, and the 184th RCT moved forward on the lagoon side.

By 1130, determined Japanese resistance had developed, but U.S. troops continued their advancement. By about 1800, they had driven approximately 1,600 yards along the length of the island from the landing beaches.

The 184th has established defensive positions for the night on a line inland of the lagoon (just west of Bldg. 1010), with the 32nd dug in on a line inland from the ocean (in the area of the weather station).

American casualties at the end of the first day of the Battle of Kwajalein Island are 17 dead and 46 wounded. Japanese casualties are estimated at 500 killed, 11 captured.

## Second day

**Feb. 2, 1944** — At the end of the second day's fighting on Kwajalein Island, hopes are high for a speedy victory tomorrow. But U.S. troops are wary and watchful tonight for "Banzai" — suicide counterattacks — by the 200 to 300 Japanese believed to be the only enemy survivors.

Reports from prisoners indicate that 1,000 to 1,200 Japanese were killed in the assault today, and that remaining defense positions are in ruins, with all communications broken.

Orders have come from the headquarters of Maj. Gen. C. H. Corlett, Commander of the 7th Infantry Division, to be alert, as "the Japanese soldier makes his suicide counterattack at dawn on the day after his cause becomes hopeless."

Today's action began at 0715, when men of the 32nd and 184th Regimental Combat Teams and 767th Tank Battalion moved forward after 15 minutes of preparatory fire from artillery on Enubuj (Carlson) Island.

Advancing along the ocean side, the 32nd, with support tanks, reduced two Japanese strong points — "Cat" (in the vicinity of the Country Club and golf course) and "Corn" (at the east end of the runway). Corn was protected by an elaborate tank trap that extended nearly halfway across the island.

These troops are dug in for the night in the abandoned trenches and shell craters around the tank trap.

The 184th, in its push up the lagoon side, met considerable resistance in the area now covered by fresh water tanks. There, the rubble of a large number of buildings offered enough cover for Japanese snipers and machine gun crews. Because tanks assigned to the 184th had been loaned to the 32nd for assault on "Corn" strong point, the infantry advance has been temporarily stalled.

The 184th has taken positions for the night on a line slightly westward of that of the 32nd.

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M-4 tank from the 767th Tank Battalion moves up in support of the 32nd RCT as they advance along the ocean side to reduce strong point "Corn."

(Continued from page 5.)

U.S. casualties for the day total 11 killed in action and 241 wounded.

In 70 sorties today, carrier-based planes dropped 40 tons of bombs and expended 20,800 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition. No Japanese aircraft has been seen operating in the entire Marshall Islands area.

Naval units of the Kwajalein Island Defense Group and transports carrying reserve forces arrived in the lagoon today. The hospital ship *Relief* also arrived today.

### *Teenager views battle*

On board the *Relief* was an 18-year-old pharmacist's mate named Erwin Hood, who returned to Kwajalein 24 years later as a Global Associates employee.

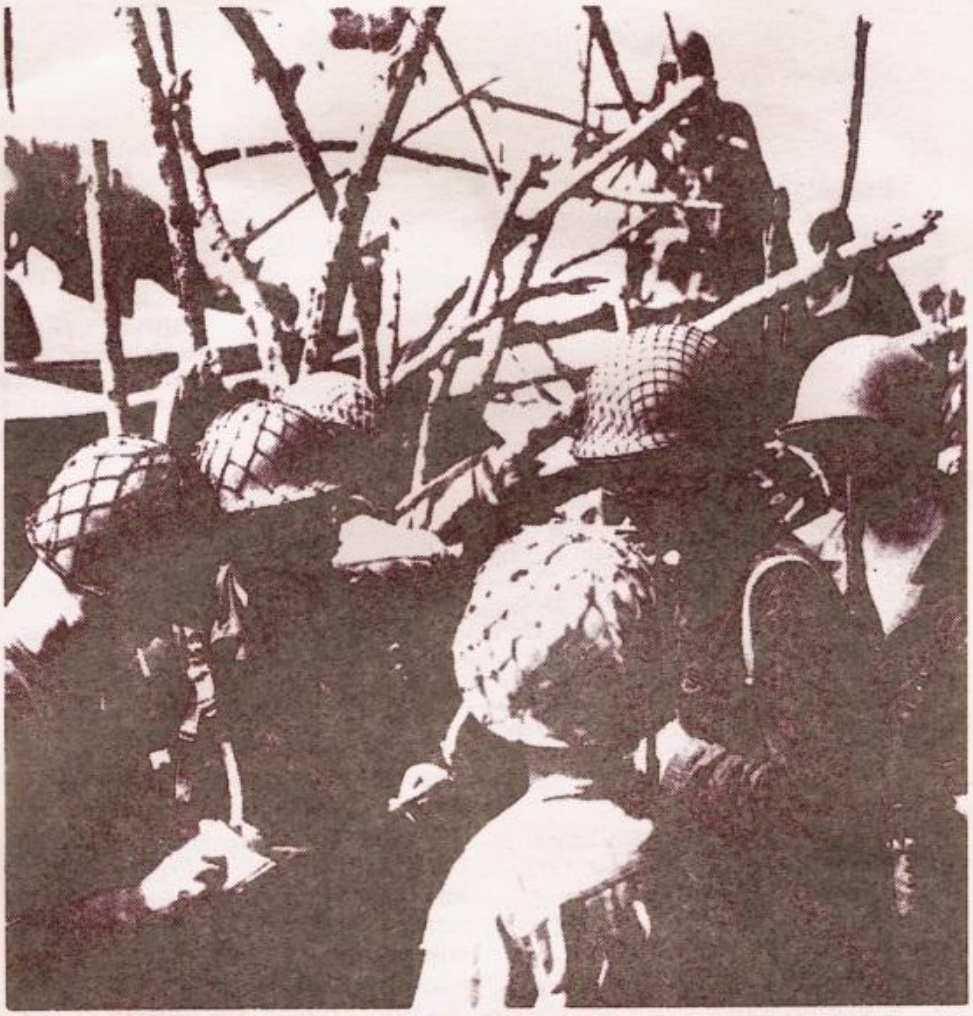
Hood recalled, "The *Relief* was the oldest hospital ship in service then. It was commissioned sometime in the '20s. We were told that it carried the largest naval gun at Kwaj — probably the largest in the world. The gun was an 18-inch model constructed for a battleship that was never built. We were told that the gun was used as ballast on the Relief."

When the *Relief* moved in to receive wounded, it was the first time a hospital ship had been positioned so close to shore during an invasion.

"At Kwaj, we took on about 300 American casualties in two hours' time. The crew gave up their beds, and most of us slept on the decks during the trip to Pearl," Hood said. "We also took on about 20 prisoners of war. One of them disappeared on the trip back. As near as we could figure out, he had committed suicide by jumping out a porthole."

The crew could see the smoke of battle from the ship, and they followed the action over the radio on the *Relief*.

"An LVT would go by carrying GIs into shore, then it would pick up wounded and bring them to the ship," remembered Hood. "A lot of GIs on Kwaj had fought before in the Aleutians, but tropical warfare was something else. They had a rough time of it before it was over — and none of them seemed sorry to leave Kwaj behind."



Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, center, 7th Infantry Division commander, confers on Kwajalein beachhead with regimental staff officers.

## Day Three

**Feb. 3, 1944** — U.S. infantrymen pushed forward today against a fanatically determined and heavily defended enemy to gain another thousand yards in the Battle of Kwajalein.

It was the costliest day yet for American troops on the island, with 54 killed in action and 255 wounded.

Last night's estimates by prisoners of 200 to 300 Japanese survivors proved to be way off the mark. The 184th Regimental Combat Team reports 800 to 1,000 Japanese killed in their area. In one huge blockhouse alone, 200 dead were found, most of them apparent suicides. The 32nd reports an additional 300 enemy dead in the advance along the ocean side.

U.S. troops had expected to make a rapid advance to the north end of Kwajalein today, but the 184th ran into serious trouble shortly after it moved out at 0715.

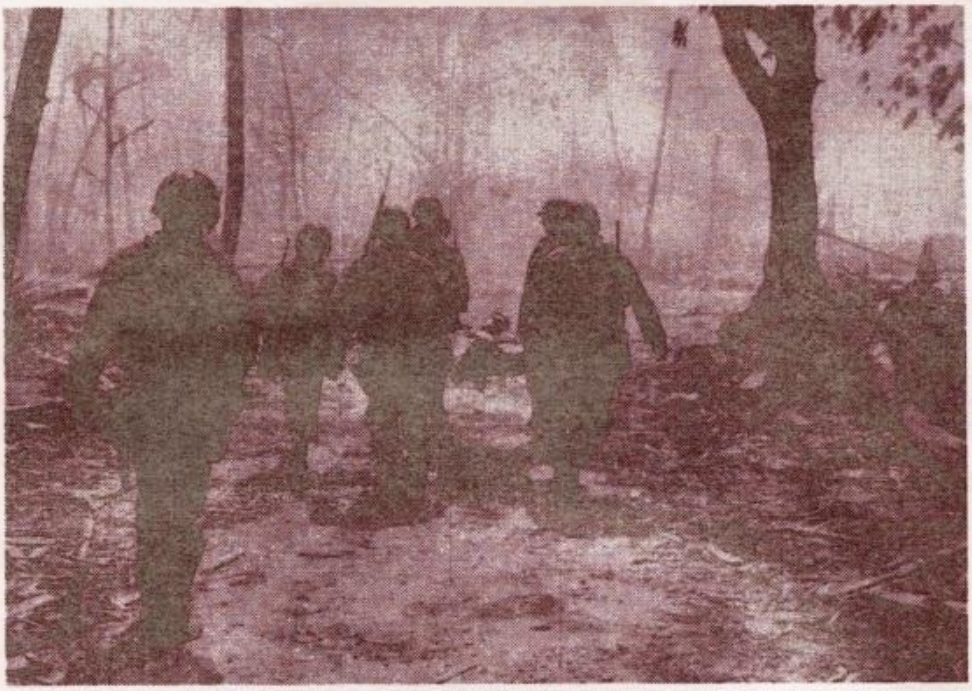
As infantrymen approached the Admiralty area (around what is now the intersection of 9th St. and Lagoon Rd.), they came without warning upon the most heavily fortified area of the island.

Facing them on the near edge of this area stood a great blockhouse of reinforced concrete. Fifty yards beyond, nearly undamaged by bombardment, were two huge shelters of thick, reinforced concrete, steel plate, and logs under a mound of sand several feet thick.

Other underground shelters and concrete blockhouses, intact and active, were scattered through dense ruins, rubble, and trees.

One observer described it as "trying to fight one's way across the

(Continued on page 7.)



Day Three was the costliest day of the Battle of Kwajalein: 255 wounded, 54 killed.

*(From page 6.)*

landscape of a nightmare." Small, often isolated, groups of infantry with rifles and whatever demolition charges they could carry or drag, blasted out one nest of Japanese after another.

Smoke and flying debris were so thick that units operating 10 yards apart were unaware of each other's presence.

One building was found to be empty. To prevent its possible reentry by enemy troops, it was demolished and set afire.

Later it was discovered that the building had contained all the beer, sake, and candy the Japanese had on Kwajalein. Only a few bottles of beer were saved.

The 32nd RCT had an easier time of it. From their jump-off point to about the location of the Terminal Building, there was little resistance.

Then a pillbox off to the left (about where the projection booth of Richardson Theater is situated) caused a temporary halt. Demolition charges and 75mm shells from medium tanks drove the enemy out one by one.

With resistance continuing light, the 32nd has advanced to the area of the Adult Pool.

As night falls, the threat of Japanese counterattack increases. Some incidents have occurred as far as 1,000 yards behind the 32nd's advance positions.

Just after sunset, a bugle was heard among the Japanese at the foot of the pier at 6th St., followed by a headlong attack by screaming Japanese. They were cut down to the last man.

Illuminating shells and naval searchlights, together with sporadic artillery and naval fire, are being employed to lessen the chance of night attack. But the American troops on Kwajalein are tensely awaiting the expected dawn charge.

**Ebeye**

Another phase of the Battle of Southern Kwajalein Atoll began this morning when the 17th Regimental Combat Team made an amphibious assault on Ebeye (Burton), chief Japanese seaplane base in the Marshalls.

Among Japanese facilities there are more than 120 machine shops, warehouses, and other buildings. A 100-yard-wide concrete ramp for seaplanes extends about 300 yards along the northern lagoon shore, with large hangars and repair shops nearby. A 160-yard concrete pier extends into the lagoon about midway along the coast.

This morning's preliminary naval and air bombardment was so effective that on the landing beach (lagoon side, south end of Ebeye) and for 200 yards inland, no live Japanese were encountered.

The advance proceeded steadily northward, slowed somewhat by enemy pillboxes and a large number of individual rifle pits in which Japanese soldiers lie concealed, waiting for a chance to fire on U.S. troops from behind.

Though resistance is determined, it seems to consist mainly of individual and small group action without apparent direction. Some Japanese were discovered fighting with spears made of bayonets attached to poles.

The 17th RCT has taken defensive positions for the night on a line about 50 yards south of the pier.

**Big Buster, Little Buster**

Big and Little Buster, between Kwajalein and Ebeye, were also taken under fire today, and occupation was completed by 1630.

# 7th Infantry victorious in Battle of Kwajalein

**Feb. 4, 1944** — The Battle of Kwajalein is over.

At dusk today, men of the 32nd Regimental Combat Team surged across the last 150 yards of the island, over-running the one remaining bunker and gun emplacement (now known as Bunker Hill, near Qtrs 223).

Across the lagoon, two and a half miles to the north, U.S. troops can see where another American victory was won today. Ebeye was declared fully secured at 1537, after the 17th RCT made a fast, almost unopposed, advance from the pier to the north shore.

The final action on Kwajalein began at sunrise, shortly after 0700, when the 32nd pushed off from last night's bivouac (near the Adult Pool) for an advance along the ocean to 6th St., where the team was to fan out for a sweep over the entire island to the north end.

Almost immediately, there was heavy fire from Japanese who had been bypassed yesterday (near the Pacific Bachelor Quarters). The ad-

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(Continued from page 7.)

vance was stalled for nearly three hours, as units turned aside to clean out positions firing on them.

At the same time, the 184th RCT was encountering pockets of determined resistance in the area between the Admiralty and the lagoon (around 9th St. and Lagoon Rd.).

Today, for the first time since the landings, the enemy has surrendered in considerable numbers. Many have been isolated, without water, for the past two days.

Thirty-one Koreans and a Japanese scurried out of one building after the 184th brought up a loudspeaker and Nisei interpreters, who broadcast promises of food, water, and immunity from harm. More than 90 prisoners were taken by the 184th during the morning.

In another area, men of the 32nd covered five Korean prisoners with BARs and moved them from shelter to shelter while the prisoners persuaded others to surrender. In less than an hour, 33 prisoners were taken.

By 1300, the 184th had reached its objective at the foot of the pier. After cutting off enemy withdrawal across 5th St., the 184th turned its attention to a thorough mop-up of areas to the rear. By 1430, all enemy action had been overcome on the lagoon side from landing beaches to the pier.

The 2nd Battalion, 32nd RCT, was in position north of 6th St. at 1345 to begin its final assault (through what is now the trailer and old housing area). The ground was a tangle of debris interlaced with trenches, many of which contained long-dead bodies. The stench of decay and the acrid odor of burned palm wood filled the air

With satchel charges, grenades, and ultimately flame throwers, the 32nd cleared dugouts and still-active pillboxes and blockhouses.

When the weary victors reached the northern tip of the island at 1920, organized resistance had ceased.

# Occupation of southern atoll complete

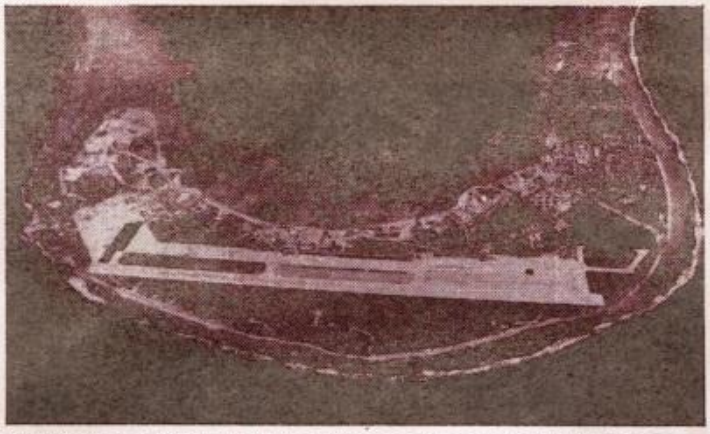
**Feb. 5, 1944** -- The Southern Invasion Force today completed occupation of Southern Kwajalein Atoll from Ennugeliggelap in the west to Gellinam in the east.

American losses were: 142 dead, 2 missing in action, 845 wounded.

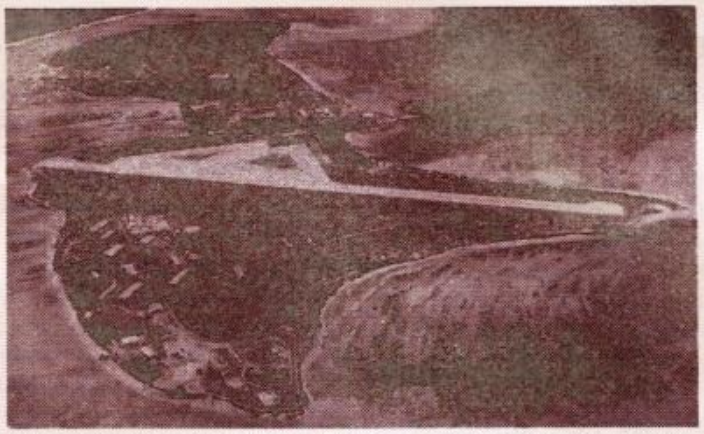
The best estimate of enemy losses in Southern Kwajalein Atoll is 4,938 dead and 206 prisoners, including 127 Koreans.

**Feb. 6, 1944** -- After a day spent burying enemy dead, the men of the 32nd and 184th RCTs turned Kwajalein Island over to garrison and defense forces.

**B-24 bomber flies over Kwajalein en route to one of the daily bombing runs on Truk in the summer or fall of 1944. Seabees and Army Engineers rebuilt the bomb-damaged Japanese airstrip in less than 30 days. Note construction on Kwajalein. There were 10,000 Army, Navy, and Marine troops on island and an additional 5,000 Navy personnel on Ebeye.**



Bucholz Army Air Field began as a Japanese fighter base.



Dyess Field was unofficially named shortly after the battle.

**Bucholz Army Air Field**—Named for Pfc. Fred H. Bucholz, a member of Co. F, 3rd Platoon, who was killed in the last three hours of the Battle of Kwajalein, fighting near what is now quarters 222 and 224. He and his sergeant were attempting to clear out Japanese soldiers who were holed up in shelters. Both men had thrown captured explosives into one of the shelters. Thinking that the explosion had killed the holdouts, they stood to survey the damage. From another shelter, a Japanese rifleman fired out a roof opening, striking Bucholz in the back and killing him instantly. Only about an hour before, Bucholz had rescued his wounded lieutenant.

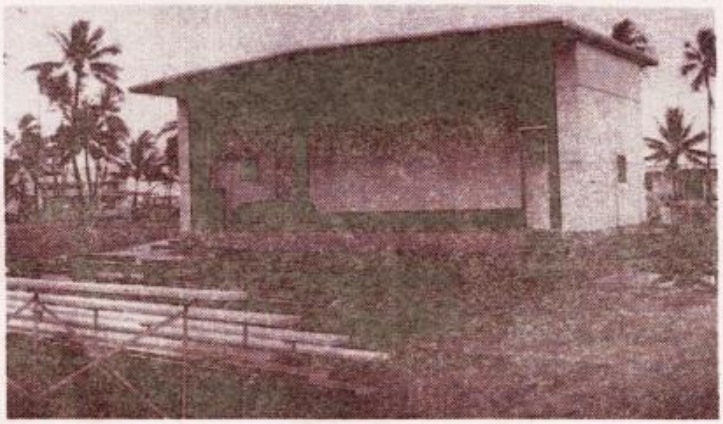
**Richardson Theater** — Named for the U.S. Army's Commanding General of the Central Pacific Area in 1944. Gen. Robert Richardson was responsible for training and logistical supply for the invasion of the Southern Kwajalein Atoll. Built in 1944, the Rich was one of seven theaters on island, and is the only one remaining. In the early years, quonset huts by the Rich were home to the chapel, Special Services, radio station WXLG, the library, and the *Hourglass*.

**Tinker's Grave** — Tinker, the Japanese dog that survived the fighting on Kwajalein, was buried in 1962 near the turtle pond. Tinker had been taken in by the folks on Kwaj and lived out his days here.

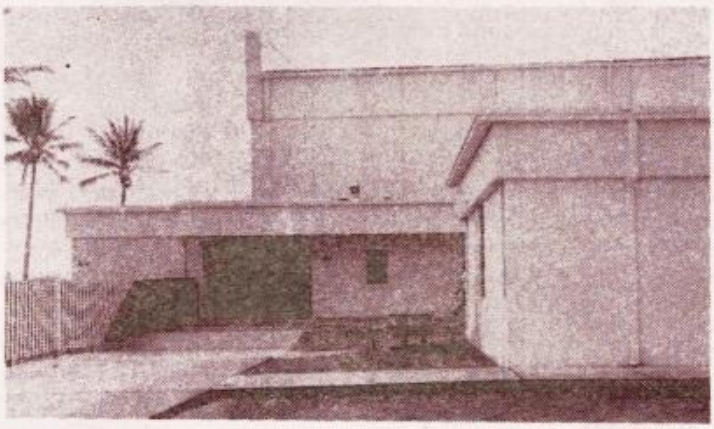
Tinker's grave by the turtle pond.

**Dyess Field** — On the last day of the invasion, Feb. 2, 1944, Lt. Col. Aquilla J. Dyess was leading a group of men on a charge against a Japanese position, when machine gun fire took his life only hours before the invasion was complete. He was the highest ranking officer to have been killed in the battles for Kwajalein, Roi, and Namur. After the battle on Roi, some of the men had hung a sign unofficially naming the airport Dyess Field. It wasn't until 1967 that the field was officially named. For his actions on Roi, Lt. Col. Dyess was awarded the Medal of Honor.

**Corlett Recreation Center** — Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, 7th Infantry Division, commanded invasion forces at the Southern end of Kwajalein Atoll. The building named for him was built in 1985. It houses a gym where basketball, volleyball, and youth soccer are played, as well as classrooms that host various community functions like church groups and community education.



Richardson Theater has had 13 facelifts since 1944.



The CRC plays a big part in community activities.

# Kwaj resident is World War II hobbyist

By Lynn Coppes

As we prepare for the 50th anniversary of the battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur, one man takes a particularly keen interest in the activities.

Tom Rogers' earliest recollection of his interest in World War II history was sitting on his grandfather's lap and looking at scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, and books on the war.

"He had an outstanding collection of books," Rogers remembers. "We'd sit for hours looking through them. He gave me his love of history, and it's always stayed with me."

The World War II hobbyist, as he likes to call himself, and Roy Clemans, USAKA Public Affairs Officer, will give the opening speeches at the anniversary's memorial services for Roi-Namur and Kwajalein. Rogers' presentation will focus on the historical picture of what occurred on each island. He also hopes "to impart some basic knowledge of the war to the residents of both islands."

Tom Rogers (second from right) enjoys a field trip to Roi-Namur with students as part of his class, "World War II and the Role of Kwajalein."

Rogers teaches a six-week class called, "World War II and the Role of Kwajalein," where he presents the Marshall Islands in a global perspective, not merely focusing on individual battles. He speaks of the islands' strategic importance taking shape during the advent of steam-powered ships, and of their military value, which was appreciated as early as the turn of the century.

Rogers has added to his fund of knowledge with traveling expeditions to Thailand and the famous bridge on the River Kwai; Singapore; and to Sentosa Island, where Britain's last major fortress stood before the enemy overwhelmed it and Singapore was forced to surrender. He's also traveled to the islands of Pohnpei, Guam, Saipan, Peleliu, and Angaur.

Tom Rogers stands next to an almost perfectly preserved type 95 Japanese tank on Pohnpei Island. With him are his children, Carrie and Christopher.

When asked which area fascinated him the most, he mentions Peleliu, located in the Palau Islands.

"This is an island that looks like the soldiers just walked off and left everything in place. There were rifles, cannons, tanks, airplanes, and crates of Japanese supplies," he recalls. "It was as if the battle ended yesterday." For that reason, however, he emphasizes that a very real danger exists in roaming around without a guide.

"The caves are fantastic. There are hundreds of them and many still contain equipment and debris from the battle. One tunnel complex is wide enough to fit a freight car and was dug to house over 1,000 soldiers plus their supplies. Twenty-seven Japanese remained hidden in these caves until 1947, not realizing that the war was over."

The battle of Kwajalein was America's first venture onto Japanese soil. The assault by the 7th Infantry Division stands as the most successful amphibious landing in all of World War II. The sad lessons of a disasterous battle at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands were learned well, and "the landing was so successful and the use of naval bombardment so effective, it was used as a textbook case in conducting amphibious operations," explains Rogers.

The islands of Roi and Namur were the first combat missions of the 4th Marine Division which was the only division in World War II to sail from the continental United States directly into combat. Kwajalein was also the site where the Navy first employed underwater demolition teams, the forerunners of the modern day Navy SEALS.

The capture of these islands was the turning point in the Pacific arena. So successful were they that "U.S. forces did not attack Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Truk as originally planned," says Rogers.

How does this unofficial historian of World War II view the commemoration which will unfold next week?

"Of course I'm excited about it," Rogers says. "But I also would like people to know that there is more to this war than a series of battles. Some may say that the war is being glorified. But during the span of World War II, there occurred the greatest threat to our national sovereignty. The freedoms and liberties we enjoy today might have been lost.

"The freedom that we have now was built on the efforts of those soldiers who risked their lives 50 years ago. It's not our goal to glorify war, but rather to remember the sacrifices made to secure the ideals that we deem precious: the liberty to conduct our lives in an atmosphere of freedom.

"Our veterans need to know their sacrifices were worth it."

# Operation Flintlock — Northern Kwajalein Atoll

**Excerpted from**
***The Fourth Marine Division***
**By Robert Sherrod**

*There is no doubt in my mind that the historians will decide, when the final returns are in, that the Central Pacific was the main stroke against Japan. This was the campaign where the 4th Marine Division fought all its battles — at Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima.*

*The 4th Marine Division was in combat a little over 60 days in World War II. But in those 60-odd days, the division saw more action than many divisions see in 600 days — action as fierce as any troops ever saw.*

*The price the division had to pay was heavy — as it must be on small, vital targets. It amounted to about 75 percent of the original divisional strength. It takes men to stand such losses and come up as determined as ever. The 4th had men.*

**Setting records**

The 4th Marine Division set three new records on its first operation: it became the first division to go directly into combat from the United States; it was the first to capture Japanese mandated territory in the Pacific; and it secured its objective in a shorter time than that of any other important operation since the attack on Pearl Harbor.

For weeks the coming battle had been known only by its code name, "Operation Flintlock." Not until the big convoy had passed the Hawaiian Islands was its destination revealed to all hands — the twin islands of Roi-Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshall Islands. Simultaneously, the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry was to invade Kwajalein Island.

During the 18-day voyage to the atoll, the Marines had plenty of time to study their objective. With Tarawa fresh in their minds, the prospect of hitting a small, heavily defended beach was not too cheerful.

Operation maps showed numerous installations — coast defense guns, heavy and medium antiaircraft guns, machine guns, blockhouses, a total of 52 pillboxes, numerous antitank trenches, rifle trenches, and barbed wire. Added to this, the two islands of Roi-Namur were hardly more than overgrown sand spits. Roi measured 1,200 by 1,250 yards at its widest points; Namur was 800 by 900 yards — neither island a square mile in size. An estimated 3,000 enemy troops were there to defend them. It was not a pleasant prospect.

Against this, however, was a preponderance of striking power. The task force that accompanied the Marine and Army divisions to the Marshalls was the largest in the Pacific to that time. The assemblage of carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers which preceded and convoyed the transports was a reassuring sight to the Marines who lined the rails. Our infantry, furthermore, would out-number the defenders two to one.

The 4th Division was part of the Northern Landing Force, under the command of Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt. Ground operations as a whole, including Kwajalein Island, were under the 5th Amphibious Corps, Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith commanding. The Joint Expeditionary Forces were commanded by Rear Adm. Richmond K. Turner, USN, and the Northern Attack Force, of which the 4th Division was the landing force, was under the command of Rear Adm. Richard L. Conolly, USN.

**Pre-invasion bombing**

Two days before D-Day, ships of the naval task forces and aircraft of the Fast Carrier Force in support of the 4th Division systematically began to bomb and shell every square yard of Roi-Namur. Three battleships — the *Tennessee*, *Maryland*, and *Colorado* — five cruisers, and 19 destroyers combined in a non-stop barrage which laid 2,655 tons of steel on the islands.

**Roi airfield under U.S. attack. Note the causeway that connected Roi to Namur, at right.** *(Photo from* Battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur.*)*

It was planned to land the 14th Regiment, with its 75mm pack howitzers and 105mm howitzers, on five small islands that flanked Roi-Namur. Two of these islands flanked the entrance to the lagoon. By seizing them, we could secure passage that would allow us to assault Roi-Namur from inside the lagoon. From these flanking islands, the artillery was to set up its guns, get the ranges, and give close fire support to the assault troops. This was Phase One of the operation; it took place Jan. 31, 1944.

## Phase One

The seizure of the small islands on either side of Roi-Namur fell to

*(Continued on page 12.)*

(Battle of Roi-Namur, from page 11.)

the 4th Division's Scout Company and 25th Regimental Combat Team. To the Scout Company and the 1st Battalion of the 25th Marines went the honor of being the first to land on an enemy-defended island in the Marshalls. They went ashore at 0958 on the seaward side of Ennuebing and Mellu islands southwest of Roi-Namur. Ennuebing was secured at 1055 and the larger Mellu at 1209. Artillery came ashore within an hour.

The 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 25th landed on three other islands southeast of Roi-Namur—Ennubirr, Ennumennet, and Ennugarret. They were secured by nightfall; artillery landed on the following morning.

**Flag on a coconut tree**

On Ennubirr, the 2nd Battalion raised the first American flag in the Marshalls — on a coconut tree. This battalion seized an important communication center containing great quantities of American-made radio equipment.

## Phase Two

The attack on Roi-Namur was Phase Two of the operation. This was to be made from the lagoon side by the 23rd and 24th Regimental Combat Teams, each landing two battalions abreast on the islands' four beaches. The 1st and 2nd battalions of the 23rd were to strike Beaches Red 2 and 3 on Roi, and the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 24th were assigned Beaches Green 1 and 2 on Namur. The day was Feb. 1, 1944. For most of the men in the division, this was the first time under fire.

**D-Day, Feb. 1, 1944**

Early in the morning, the amphibian tractors rumbled down the ramps of the LSTs, and the LCVPs were swung over the sides of the transports. The ships were still far out in the lagoon, and the smoking island was but a streak of sand and haze in the distance. H-Hour was set for 1000, but shortly after the boats began to rendezvous, word came that the landing had been delayed. Men in the boats waited nervously.

Shortly after 1100, the assault units were waved over the line of departure, 4,000 yards from the shore. Naval gunfire began to hurl its final salvos against the beach; dive bombers plummeted to drop 1,000-pound blockbusters on installations not yet completely demolished; fighter planes came over for strafing runs. It was the heaviest and most perfectly coordinated concentration of pre-landing bombardment yet seen in the Pacific.

**Planes crippled, enemy fleeing**

And it paid big dividends. The first waves hit the beach at 1200. On Roi, the large, three-strip airfield was dotted with crippled Japanese planes and wrecked defenses. All but a few hundred of the enemy had fled to nearby Namur, which afforded better protection against the shelling. When assault companies of the 23rd landed, the situation seemed almost too good to believe. Opposition had been completely disorganized, and the beach was virtually undefended. By 1217 the regiment had reached Phase Line 0.1, and the good news was radioed to the commanding general: "This is a pip. Give us the word and we'll take the island." The order came back to halt and reorganize, but the tanks and two supporting companies had pushed ahead. They were recalled to keep them from being shelled by naval guns.

**Tough going on Namur**

On nearby Namur the going was not so easy. Here the Japanese had set up a stronger defense in the form of fire trenches and pillboxes. Thick vegetation gave them excellent concealment and served as camouflage. Although the naval shelling had killed and wounded many hundreds, there was still a sizable, although dazed and disorganized, force remaining.

The 2nd Battalion, on the right, received only a little scattered small-arms fire from the beach and pushed inland some 200 yards against light opposition. The 3rd Battalion, on the left, ran into trouble immediately from several undamaged pillboxes. Many men were hit as they stepped from the landing boats. The assault companies were ordered to by-pass the pillboxes and leave them for demolition teams. The companies reached the Phase Line 0-1 by 1400, paused to reorganize, and waited for tanks and halftracks to come up.

**"The whole island has blown up!"**

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion moved ahead rapidly. Suddenly a large enemy blockhouse, used as a storage place for aerial bombs and torpedo warheads, exploded without warning. An immense tower of

(Continued on page 13.)

**Marine tanks lumber ashore as additional troops and supplies land on Roi Island. View from the battered remains of the Japanese administration building.**
*(Photo from* The Fourth Marine Division.)

**Japanese blockhouse explodes on Namur.**
*(Photo from* The Battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur.)

*(Battle of Roi-Namur, from page 12.)*

smoke and rubble including many torpedo warheads shot into the sky. Concussion felled men in every direction and fragments of metal and cement caught dozens before they could jump into shellholes. An officer vividly described the scene:

*"An ink-black darkness spread over a large part of Namur such that the hand could not be seen in front of the face. Debris continued to fall for a considerable length of time, which seemed unending to those in the area who were all unprotected from the huge chunks of concrete and steel thudding on the ground about them.*

*"Before the explosion, the large blockhouse was conspicuously silhouetted against the skyline. After the explosion, nothing remained but a huge water-filled crater. Men were killed and wounded in small boats a considerable distance from the beach by the flying debris.*

*"Two more violent explosions, but lesser in intensity than the first, occurred among the assault troops during the next half hour."*

The battalion suffered more than half of its total battle casualties in this swift moment, and its advance was held up temporarily.

By this time, the Japanese were recovering somewhat and beginning to offer fiercer resistance. The battle for Namur was not going to be easy. The 3rd Battalion, with tanks in support, pushed ahead at 1630.

**First Medal of Honor**

A platoon under Lt. John V. Power soon encountered a pillbox that was spraying death all along the Marine lines. They rushed it, trying to lob grenades through the gunport or to get a place-charge against it. But the fire was too hot. They decided to work around the pillbox and attack from the rear. Lt. Power led the way. As he approached the doorway, a bullet caught him in the stomach, but he didn't stop. To the amazement of the Japanese, he charged forward, emptying his carbine into the narrow slot of a door. A Marine pulled the lieutenant back into the safety of a bomb crater, where he died a few minutes later. Lt. Power was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. *(See story, page 17.)*

There were many other acts of heroism on Roi-Namur that day; not all of them were recorded. Typical was the action of Pfc. Richard Scheidt. A bullet hit Scheidt in the arm a few minutes after he was ashore on Namur. A corpsman bandaged the wound, and Scheidt stayed with his company. At one point, his platoon inadvertently pushed too far forward and was ordered to withdraw.

Upon reaching the new position, Scheidt saw a Marine, Edward Mann, a hundred yards ahead of the lines, wounded in the eyes, unable to see to make his way back. Bullets were spraying the field. Despite his wound, Scheidt went forward alone.

There was no way to lead the blinded comrade back except to stand up; he unfastened the sling of his rifle, gave Mann one end, and started back to his lines. Marines stopped firing to avoid hitting them, and, with Japanese soldiers blazing away, the two men made it. Scheidt was later awarded the Silver Star.

**Slow going**

The 24th's 2nd Battalion, held up by the three violent explosions in its midst, got under way again at 1700.

*(Continued on page 14.)*

**One of the landing beaches at Namur. Yokohama Pier is in the background.**

Marines warily approach one of the many large blockhouses.

*(Battle of Roi-Namur, from page 13.)*

The going was slow through stiffening resistance in the rubble of destroyed buildings. By 1530, when the order came to dig in for the night, the battalion had achieved a maximum advance of 300 yards. The 3rd Battalion's forward elements were within a few hundred yards of the island's northern shore. Its right flank, however, angled sharply back to tie in with the 2nd Battalion. The two battalions set up perimeter defense for the night.

**A hundred separate fights**

Across the causeway on Roi, the 23rd Regiment raced ahead after resuming the attack at 1600. The enemy, thoroughly disorganized from our shelling, put up no single, well-planned defense. Instead, there were a hundred separate fights by individuals and small groups without unified command. Under such conditions, the Japanese soldier is a brave and stubborn fighter. On Roi, the enemy took to the partially covered drainage ditches that surrounded the airstrips, popping up to fire into the rear of our troops. This caused some confusion and not a few casualties, but the position of the enemy was hopeless. Demolitions and flame throwers routed them out, and riflemen picked off those who did not choose to blow themselves up with their own grenades. By 1800, six hours after the landing, and with less than three hours of actual offensive assault, Roi was declared secured.

**Second Medal of Honor**

There was little opportunity for individual heroism on Roi, but one man, Pfc. Richard B. Anderson, found himself in a position to save several comrades from death or injury from a hand grenade. He was killed, but his comrades were unhurt, and for this self-sacrifice Anderson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. *(See story, page 17.)*

By late afternoon, men could pause for breath and look around them for the first time. The ruins through which they had fought were indescribably fascinating. There was hardly a recognizable trace of what had been the Japanese headquarters. On Roi, the gaunt skeletons of a hangar and an operations building were all that remained standing. On Namur, only three buildings, all severely battered, had survived our shelling. There were a large administrative building, a concrete radio station, and an ammunition storage building.

Thousands of shells had exploded on the island, leaving the ground pitted with craters. Shattered breadfruit and coconut palms stood at fantastic angles. Japanese dead were sprawled over the island by the hundreds in shellholes, near ammunition dumps, in the ruins of buildings; most of them were horribly mutilated by the bombardment.

Sheets of corrugated iron were strewn everywhere, twisted, ripped, full of holes. Concrete pilings on which barracks had rested stuck out of the ground in rows like tombstones.

On Roi, many Japanese planes, caught when our shelling began, lay like giant birds pinned helplessly to the ground, their wings broken.

**Doves, chickens, pig, and goose**

Yet, in the midst of this carnage, a few traces of normal life remained. A dovecote on top of the concrete radio station was untouched, and birds nested there, oblivious to the noise of battle. A pig, several chickens, and a very large goose had somehow escaped death and wandered about unconcernedly.

But the battle was not over. The last few hundred Japanase on Namur, pocketed against the north-

*(Continued on page 15.)*

Devastated landscape of battle.

*(Battle of Roi-Namur, from page 14.)*

ern shore, determined to die in traditional Japanese style. Under cover of rain and darkness made errie by bursting star shells, they staged a *Banzai* attack against the 24th Regiment's 3rd Battalion. Companies I and L received the brunt of the attack, which lasted, on and off, for several hours.

At one point, it was necessary to pull back our lines to a more secure position. This led to one of the most remarkable series of incidents of the battle, an example of the spirit of comradeship between Marines and Navy corpsmen.

**Courageous Navy corpsman**

Pharmacist's Mate 1st Class James V. Kirby, a member of the 3rd Battalion's aid station on the beach, was sent up to the front during the late afternoon to assist company corpsmen. Arriving there, he worked with the wounded for some time and then collected a group of them a short distance behind the lines to await stretcher bearers. But darkness overtook them. Orders had been given to fire on anyone moving about at night, and the litter teams had to stay on the beach. Kirby settled down with his charges to sweat out the night.

He didn't know what was coming. When the Japanese counterattack came, and the 3rd Battalion had to pull back, Kirby found himself — and the wounded — between the enemy and his own troops. He could not go back for help without endangering the lives of the wounded. He got them into a large bomb crater, administered first aid, cheered them up, and gave them cigarettes, which they smoked under the blackout of a poncho.

**In the crossfire**

When the Marines charged forward to regain their old positions, Kirby found himself in the crossfire of battle. He could hear the cries and groans of newly wounded, and, crawling out of his hole to find them, led them to the safety of the crater. There he dressed their wounds before returning to new cries in the darkness.

One of the cries that split the night was that of Pfc Richard K. Sorenson. He had hurled himself on an enemy grenade to save the six comrades with him in a shellhole. *(See story, page 17.)*

Kirby reached Sorenson in time to tie a severed artery and stop the bleeding, which would surely have cost Sorenson his life. He took Sorenson to the hole where the other wounded lay and treated him throughout the night.

**Third Medal of Honor, Bronze Star**

When daybreak came, and the Japanese *Banzai* had been completely broken, a crew of corpsmen advanced to search for Kirby. They found him and a total of 15 wounded. He had won a 12-hour tilt with death. For his meritorious service, he was later awarded the Bronze Star. And Sorenson — whose action had saved his six companions — lived to receive the Medal of Honor.

**Father and son**

Tragedy struck in many places that night, but no death was more tragic than that of Pfc Jack Brown, a member of the 24th Regiment's 3rd Battalion. Nineteen-year-old Jack had stowed away on the transport so he could be with his father, Cpl. Earl Brown, 44. Father and son had been in the same company, but when it was time for the division to ship out, Jack was hospitalized with a minor illness and transferred to another outfit. "Pop" had boarded the ship alone. Just before the division sailed, Jack was found stowed away, and was taken off and arrested.

Cpl. Brown's wife phoned the commandant's office in Washington and told the story of her husband's and son's efforts to be together. The charges against Jack were dropped, and he joined his old company. Father and son were together all during the trip to the Marshalls.

Jack hit the beach first and was killed during the night when the Japanese counterattacked. Pop went on fighting — alone.

**Islolated bands of enemies**

Only a few isolated bands of desperate Japanese were left to oppose the last phase of the battle for Namur. When morning came, tanks and halftracks moved up to support the final push, blasting pillboxes, blockhouses, and other fortifications. Cpl. Michael Giba told how his tank ran up to the edge of a bomb crater, stopped, and was soon swarming with enemy troops.

"I looked out the periscope," Giba said. "A Japanese lay down on the turret and looked me right in the eye. He seemed kind of puzzled about

*(Continued on page 16.)*

**The battle draws to an end, and weary Marines take the road back.**

**Samurai swords, rifles, and beer received top billing on the souvenir hunting list.** *(Photo from* The Fourth Marine Division.*)*

*(Battle of Roi-Namur, from page 15.)*

just what to do. Then he rose to a squatting position, removed a grenade from his picket, held it against the periscope, pulled the pin, and lay down on top of it. The periscope was broken, but none of us was hurt. The Japanese was killed."

Thus the battle drew to an end. The Third Battalion had jumped off at 0900; the 2nd and 1st moved up at 1000. The island was declared secured at 1215, 24 hours and 15 minutes after the landing.

**Fourth Medal of Honor**

But there was to be one last-minute tragedy before the flag went up officially on Namur. Lt. Col. Aquilla J. Dyess, commander of the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, was leading his men against the last pocket of Japanese when he was caught in a burst of enemy machine-gun fire. He was killed instantly — the highest ranking officer to lose his life in the operation. Lt. Col. Dyess was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. *(See story, page 17.)* His was the fourth for the division during the engagement — probably an all-time record for 24 hours of fighting.

## Phase Three

Phase Two of the operation was now over, and Phase Three began — mopping up all the islets in the northern two-thirds of the atoll.

The battle for Kwajalein Island was still in progress when the 25th Regiment began its sweep down the atoll. The 2nd Battalion followed the arm that extended southeast from Roi-Namur, while the 1st moved to the southwest. During the next seven days, they reconnoitered the string of islets, finding an occasional stray band of Japanese, a few friendly natives, or nothing.

Where the reef curves almost due west, the 3rd Battalion relieved the 1st and continued to drive toward Ebadon, extreme westernmost isle of the atoll. Then they followed the reef in a general southeasterly direction to complete the circuit.

Altogether, the 25th Regiment secured 53 islands, with names like Boggerlapp, Marsugalt, Gegibu, and Oniotto harder to pronounce then to capture.

Meanwhile, the 15th Defense Battalion came ashore to garrison Roi-Namur. Marshall Islanders who had lived on the islands were helped back to their homes and paid in U.S. currency to help clear the wreckage and bury Japanese dead. On Roi, tractors, bulldozers, trucks, and jeeps ground endlessly, bringing in supplies, ammunition, and material for installations and clearing away debris. Over the blasted Japanese operations building flew a huge American flag.

On both Roi and Namur, much of the reconstruction of the islands was done by Seabees. For the first time in the Pacific, they had been trained and equipped as part of a regular Marine Corps landing force. With the 20th (Engineer) Regiment, they unloaded ammunition, brought in supplies, laid a portable plank road on the beach, recovered unexploded shells, cleared the airfield, and set up a water-distillation plant.

**The inferno of Feb. 12, 1944**

On Feb. 12, the Japanese hit the jackpot. A small group of planes, flying high, dropped a few incendiary bombs on Roi Island. One of them struck our ammunition dump and a moment later the whole island was an exploding inferno.

The raid lasted only five minutes, but the bombardment from the ammunition dump continued for four hours. Casualties were numerous, and it was later estimated that damage to our supplies and equipment amounted to $1 million.

**A great victory.**

With the capture of Kwajalein Atoll, the United States had strategic control of all the Marshall Islands. Japanese garrisons on Mili, Wotje, Maloelap, and Jaluit were by-passed and isolated. Japanese communications south from Wake Island had been severed. We had acquired another stepping stone on our march across the Pacific. The lagoon furnished an excellent staging base. The airfields brought Truk and other islands in the Carolines. within our range. For a small price, we had won a great victory.

The 4th Marines reached Maui during the period Feb. 21-25, but there were some who would not come back. A total of 190 Marines had been killed and 547 wounded during the brief engagement. Overnight, the "green" 4th had become veterans. We had captured 264 prisoners, while another 3,472 enemy troops lay buried on tiny Roi-Namur.

# Heroic deed earns The Medal of Honor

By Lynn Coppes

Richard Sorenson, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in the battles of Roi-Namur, will lead the parade as Grand Marshal Monday at our Picnic in the Park. Accompanying him on the float will be Maurice Reeves, representative of the 7th Infantry Division Association; Frank Pokrop, representative of the 4th Marine Association; and an RMI scout.

Sorenson remembers the night of Jan. 31, 1944. He and his fellow Marines were members of an assault battalion attached to the 4th Marine Division, headed for combat on the island of Namur. They talked about the battle taking place the following day. What would they do, they asked each other, if a grenade fell in their midst? Sorenson said he guessed the closest man to it should just take the hit.

The following day, Sorenson took that hit. Completely surrounded by the Japanese, Sorenson was in a shell hole along with five of his comrades when a grenade landed close to him. True to their conversation the previous evening, Sorenson threw himself on it. The grenade went off, grieviously wounding him in the right hip, arm, and leg. His five buddies were unharmed.

For that act of courage, Sorenson was awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration given for an act of bravery.

The young private spent seven months in military hospitals and underwent several operations to remove embedded shrapnel.

In May 1991, he was honored in his hometown of Anoka, Minn. with a larger-than-life bronze statue. Called "Above and Beyond," the statue shows a young Marine carrying a machine gun on his right shoulder.

According to the *Pioneer Press*, a St. Paul, Minnesota newspaper, Sorenson said at the unveiling: "You feel very humble because there were a lot of men who died in isolated positions and who performed heroically — there was just no one there to witness it.

"I can't help but think of those who made the supreme sacrifice, and those others who performed deeds of valor who went unnoticed and unrecorded."

Marine Pfc. Richard Sorenson receives the Medal of Honor from Maj. Gen. J.C. Fegan on July 19, 1944.

Sorenson added that besides the immense pride and esprit de corps of being a Marine, he treasures the values instilled in him at boot camp that have stayed with him over the years: discipline, loyalty, dignity, and respect for other people.

Said Sorenson, "It really is true that once you're a Marine, you're always a Marine."

### *An historical note ...*

It was during the Civil War in July 1862, that Congress authorized the Medal of Honor "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty."

The following year, the first awards were given to to Pvt. Jacob Parrott and five other soldiers. They had demonstrated extraordinary valor in a daring raid behind the Confederate lines near Chattanooga, Tenn.

The Medal of Honor remains the highest honor the United States can bestow upon any individual in the armed services.

## *Other Congressional Medal of Honor recipients*

Of the 11 million men bearing arms during World War II, only 332 were recognized with the nation's highest honor for their "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty."

In little more than 24 hours of fighting at Roi-Namur, four soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor. The following Marines paid the ultimate price for the preservation of our nation's freedom.

Pfc. Richard B. Anderson was preparing to throw a grenade at an enemy position when it slipped from his hands and rolled toward the men at the bottom of a shell hole. With no time to retrieve the armed weapon and throw it, he chose to save his companions and sacrifice himself by throwing his body on the grenade.

Lt. Col. Aquilla J. Dyess led a powerful final attack against enemy forces posting himself between the opposing lines to direct a group of infantry. He was killed by a burst of enemy machine-gun fire. The landing field at Roi-Namur is named in his honor.

1st Lt. John V. Power was severely wounded in the stomach while setting a demolition charge on a Japanese pillbox. Holding the wound with his left hand and firing with his right, he continued to advance toward the opening torn by the explosive charge. He struggled to within a few feet of the opening and emptied his carbine into the pillbox. When he was attempting to reload, the enemy opened fire at him at point-blank range.

On Feb. 6, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Hall at Kwajalein, a tribute will be paid to Power and Anderson who will be recognized for their acts of bravery.

A plaque will be dedicated to 1st Lt. Power, and VFW Post 10268 will be named in his honor. Officiating at the dedication will be Jerry Brewer, VFW Commander.

Ken Messerich, with American Legion Post 44, will dedicate a plaque to the memory of Pfc. Anderson.

# Remember the Marshallese scouts

By Jane Toma

Hideo Milne, marine and recreation superintendent at USAKA, was just a baby when the Americans came to the Marshall Islands during World War II. Although he doesn't remember those days, he has cherished recollections about historic events of the era from his relatives who were interpreters and scouts for the Americans during the war. He recalls how the uncles were recruited and worked.

Hideo Milne

After the invasion of Kwajalein, U.S. servicemen came to Ebon, where Hideo's family lived. There were very few Japanese living on Ebon at that time, says Hideo. The Japanese fired upon the Americans and were subsequently killed.

Afraid, the Marshallese on Ebon approached the Americans with a flag of truce. The soldiers asked for Hideo's uncles, Edward, James M., James K., and Walter Milne, all grandsons of a Scottish whaling captain and a Gilbertese woman. The Americans knew the men spoke English and wanted them to translate and reassure the Marshallese that they would not be killed.

Hideo's uncles boarded a landing ship tank (LST) vessel where they joined up with Dwight Heine, grandson of the missionary Carl Heine, and several other Marshallese men who had been picked up by the Americans on other islands. They all went to Kwajalein and worked as interpreters and scouts for the American forces.

The scouts helped with the "mop up" or securing of the islands and atolls that were not heavily fortified by the Japanese. They went ashore at night to check on the Japanese and explain to the Marshallese that the Americans would not hurt them.

Edward told Hideo that the Marshallese were afraid of him at first. Marshallese people in those days, he explained, did not travel to other islands, and Edward, with his light skin and bald head, did not appear to be Marshallese.

The Marshallese were fearful of the Japanese who had confiscated food and severely punished them if they didn't cooperate. The Japanese also told the Marshallese that the Americans would kill everyone.

The Americans bypassed fortified bases on Jaluit, Maloelap, Mili, and Wotje atolls. Although they didn't invade, U.S. forces harassed those bases daily with bullets and bombs.

Edward and other scouts went on reconnaissance missions on those atolls to report on the condition of the Marshallese and Japanese there. When he was on Maloelap, Edward learned that his brother Alex was imprisoned at the concentration camp on Taroa, Maloelap.

Alex had disappeared after some American pilots had been shot down. When the Japanese came to get him to interpret, he was out gathering breadfruit. Suspecting that he was trying to help the pilots, the Japanese took him away. His family never saw him again. Visiting Maloelap in the '50s, Hideo found a grave with Alex's name on it. The Marshallese at Taroa said he had been beheaded.

Hideo's uncles are gone and with them important information about a very significant time. "They rarely talked about that time," says Hideo. "And only when I asked. I'm glad I asked about that time of their lives, but I wish I had asked more."

James K. Milne, later a Scout for the Americans, pictured as a child with his family. Left to right, front row: James K. Milne, James S. Milne, John N. Milne (sitting on James S.'s lap), Llomere Milne, and Mita Curry. Back row: May Milne, Alimida Milne and Florence Milne. James K. is one of Hideo's uncles who worked as a scout during WWII. His father, John N., is the son of Scottish whaling captain Thomas Edward Milne. Llomere is James S.'s wife, Florence is his sister, and May, John N., and Llomere are his other children. Mita is the daughter of one of his sisters.

## Strategy

(From page 2)

ners had underestimated the strength of the Japanese island fortress. The naval artillery couldn't penetrate the concrete and steel bunkers overlaid with coral and coconut logs. Preliminary naval and air bombardment was inadequate. Most Japanese weapons were still operational when the men reached the shore. Tactical and logistical deficiencies also hampered the assault. In addition, hydrographic information was inadequate.

The battle at Tarawa tested an amphibious doctrine that had never been used, and the lessons learned would be applied to Kwajalein.

The experience gained at Tarawa, coupled with the expansion of U.S. arms in the Pacific, made the almost-perfect amphibious operation at Kwajalein possible.

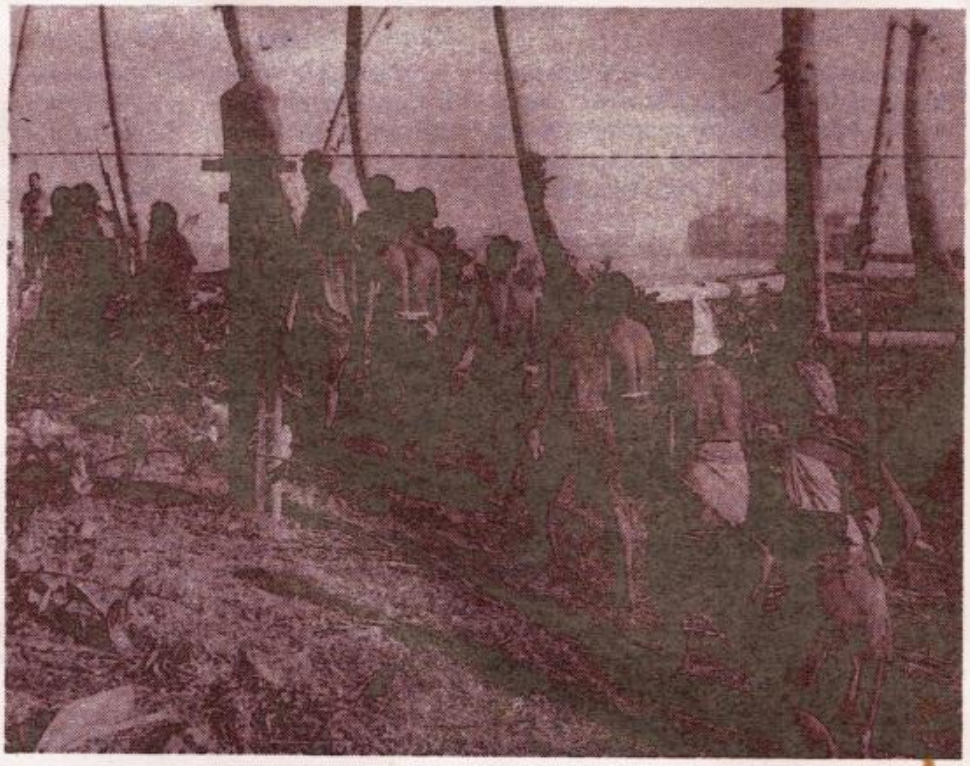
# Islanders give thanks for surviving war

By Pat Cataldo

In the early days of February 1944, as the Battle of Kwajalein raged to an end, groups of dazed Marshall Islanders crept uncertainly from dugouts on Kwajalein Island. They had survived the most pulverizing bombardment of the war in the Pacific.

Most of the islanders had been without food for a week, without water for several days. Few had ever seen an American; all were fearful of their reception, but more fearful yet that bombs or tanks would bury them alive. They emerged under truce flags made of bits of their ragged clothing to face what an American on the scene described as "the landscape of a nightmare."

The garden island of coconut, pandanus, and breadfruit, which Japan had made its principal naval base in the Marshalls, was devastated and burning. Of all the lush growth that once had covered it from lagoon to ocean, almost nothing remained. The sky was dark with the smoke of battle; death seemed everywhere.



Marshallese survivors of the bombardment and liberation of South Kwajalein go to Ennylabegan for care.

Survivors recall with wonder that so great had been the shock of their experience, they did not feel the pain of wounds nor grief for the death of loved ones until long afterward. Yet they remember with warm gratitude the American soldier who quickly gave them water and food and shepherded them to safety. Many especially remember the tall American chaplain who strode toward them with a friendly smile, phrase book open, and did his best to pronounce the Marshallese greeting, "Yokwe yuk."

The most seriously wounded Marshallese were evacuated to a hospital ship in the lagoon; minor casualties were treated in the field hospital on Enubuj (Carlson). The rest were taken to Ennylabegan (Carlos), which had been relatively untouched by battle. There the Marshallese were joined by evacuees from other islands of the southern atoll. They were housed in former Japanese barracks, supplied with clothing and blankets, fed in Army chow lines.

At first, they were terrified that the Japanese would return. But gradually they came to understand that they were safe from the war.

Out of thankfulness for the survival of their people and islands came the observance of *Ran in Kommolol*, Liberation Day, a day of thanksgiving. It is an annual commemoration, unique to the people of Kwajalein Atoll. The official date is Feb. 9, but for many years, the observance has been held on the Sunday following so that all may participate.

This year, a *Ran in Kommolol* will be observed in conjunction with the U.S.-Marshallese commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur, Feb. 5, 6, and 7. But many Kwajalein Atoll residents will continue the observance until the traditional day of Feb. 9.

The day begins with a service of thanksgiving at the church, followed by feasting, group singing, and marching.

For the first *Ran in Kommolol* in 1945, a liberation song was especially written, called *Emjelong Emjelok*, "The Sky and Earth Have Burst." Singing is an important part of most Marshallese celebrations, and the islanders are wonderfully prolific songwriters, producing new songs for every important occasion. For example, instead of old favorite Christmas songs, they prefer to write dozens of new ones every year. But *Emjelong Emjelok* has become a tradition.

## Attention WWII veterans and Marshallese Scouts

USAKA is participating in a program to collect information about the World War II history of Kwajalein Atoll. This information will contribute to historic preservation programs at USAKA and throughout the Marshall Islands. Please participate in this important project by sharing your experiences and knowledge of events at Kwajalein Atoll before and during the war.

Questionnaires are available at the Welcome Center. Historians and other personnel are taking interviews this month. Call 4224 to receive a questionnaire or to schedule an interview.

## An historical perspective
# The 4th Marine and the 7th Infantry Divisions

### 4th Marine Division

In August 1943, when it became apparent that the Marine Corps would have to be increased, the 4th Marine Division was organized at Camp Pendleton, Calif. The bulk of the group was made up of Marines, some of whom were right out of basic training. None of the ground troops had been in combat, and they were the only division in World War II to sail directly from the continental United States into battle. Their destination were the islands of Roi and Namur in the Marshalls.

### Marines victorious

At stake on the beaches of those two islands was the entire strategy for victory in the Pacific war. The Marines, having completed training and broken camp just weeks earlier, successfully pierced the Japanese defense perimeter on Roi-Namur and emerged victorious following their first time under fire.

"As a first battle for the division," recalls one veteran, "our casualties were minimal, the operation lasted only a couple of days, and it was a great confidence-builder for bigger operations in the future."

From 1944 to 1945 the 4th Division took part in the successful campaigns at Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima.

In the short space of one year, the division participated in four major amphibious assaults and won two presidential citations.

### Unit stands ready

The unit was deactivated at the end of 1945 and put on reserve status.

"The combat record of this division in World War II was exemplary. The 4th Marine Division stands ready to carry out any mission assigned as the Marine Corps' Force in Readiness," said Maj. Gen. Edward Miller in his 1976 Armed Forces Day message.

The ultimate goal of any Marine is readiness. Created for battle in 1943, the division's purpose remains the same.

### Army's 7th Infantry Division

The division was first activated at Camp Wheeler, Ga. in 1917. After landing in France the following year, the division first experienced battle near Villersen-Haye, and won the Lorraine Campaign Streamer for its part in the Allied attack on "Penny Ridge." When the armistice was signed, the 7th performed occupation duty in Germany.

### Action in the Pacific

As war clouds gathered over the Pacific in 1940, the 7th Infantry Division was reactivated at Fort Ord, Calif., and in 1943, they arrived in the Aleutians. As a result of their success in recapturing the only American territory seized by the Japanese, eight units of the 7th were awarded Distinguished Unit Citations.

Sent to the Hawaiian Islands, the division learned the principles and techniques of jungle warfare, and in February 1944, the successful invasion of Kwajalein and Ebeye was carried out.

Again they were sent to Hawaii, this time for more intensified training, and in October 1944, the 7th led the first U.S. landing in the Philippines.

### Korean battle

When hostilities broke out in Korea in 1950, the division was chosen to launch an amphibious attack at Inchon, and shortly afterwards, a second amphibious landing on the northeast coast of North Korea at Iwon. Their mission was to advance to the Korean-Manchurian border. Three weeks later, they reached their goal — the only U.S. unit to do so.

It was during these battles that the division earned the title "Bayonet Division," for closing in on the enemy, and destroying him with hand grenades and bayonets in hand-to-hand fighting.

In 1953, the firing along the Korean front ceased, and another chapter was closed in the 7th Infantry Division's record of achievements. The division stayed on until 1971 to ensure that communist aggression would not be resumed.

In December 1972, Fort Ord was designated as the home of the 7th Infantry Division, and its colors and memorabilia were housed in a museum there.

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## How our newspaper got its name

The shoulder sleeve insignia of the 7th Infantry Division consists of two black, equilateral triangles placed vertically on a red circular disc giving it an hourglass shape.

The hourglass of the insignia was consequently used in the title of the island newspaper, The Kwajalein *Hourglass*.

## — Weather —
**Courtesy of Aeromet**

**Saturday night:** Mostly cloudy, widely scattered showers, winds E at 12-17 knots
**Sunday:** Partly sunny, widely scattered showers, winds at 12-17 knots
**Sunday night:** Partly cloudy, isolated showers, winds ENE 10-15 knots
**Monday:** Mostly sunny, isolated showers, winds ENE 12-17 knots
**Monday night:** Fair, isolated showers, winds NE 15-20 knots
**Tuesday:** Sunny, winds NE 15-20 knots
**Tuesday night:** Partly cloudy, winds ENE 12-17 knots


### The Kwajalein Hourglass

The Hourglass is named for the unit crest of the U.S. Army 7th Infantry Division. The division liberated the island from the forces of Imperial Japan on Feb. 4, 1944.

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